

# FWP Commission Agenda Item Cover Sheet

**Meeting Date:** February 10, 2011

**Agenda Item:** Introduction to the Fort Peck Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan

**Division:** Fisheries

**Action Needed:** Informational

**Time for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

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## Background

FWP Fisheries Bureau will be kicking off the re-write of the Fort Peck Reservoir Fisheries Management Plan in 2011. The existing management plan, which was signed by Director Hagener in March 2002, will expire on January 1, 2012.

In general, there has been limited controversy surrounding this plan and it is anticipated that the new plan will address elements that will require minor revision but will attempt to continue the transparent and cooperative tone that has been achieved with users.

The current Management Plan has been directed by the following Goal Statement: *To manage the diverse, multi-species Fort Peck Reservoir fishery with the primary emphasis on producing a high quality walleye fishery.* The principal elements of the existing management plan are: 1) walleye limits; 2) forage fish; 3) reservoir water level management; 5) tournaments; 6) angler satisfaction goals; and 7) walleye stocking rates.

In November 2010, FWP Fisheries initiated an on-line scoping survey that was designed to gauge satisfaction with the existing management plan. The public was made aware of this survey through multiple press releases and a post card (mailed to a randomly drawn 1500 warm water stamp holders). This survey is slated to end January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Preliminary results of this survey indicate that 46% of respondents like the emphasis on walleye management and 23% like the current plan. Dislikes of the current plan entail the US Army Corps of Engineers water level management (17%), FWP not stocking enough walleye (17%) and too many fishing tournaments (10%). When asked what respondents would like to see changed in the current plan, water level management (19%) ranked first, limit number of tournaments (15%) ranked second and stocking more walleye (9%) ranked third.

## Public Involvement Process & Results

The goal of the R6 Fisheries Program is to conduct an open, efficient and cost-effective process with the goal of completing this plan by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. As the plan is drafted, there will be numerous opportunities for public comment. Additionally, biologists will present management alternatives to numerous sportsmen's groups throughout the 2011 spring. This document will comply with MEPA requirements.